

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed April 12, 2006. In the Office Action the examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-11, 15, 16, 19 and 20 and objected to claim 17. With this amendment claims 1-15 and 19 are amended, claim 21 is added and the remaining claims are unchanged. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

In item 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings. It should be noted that the Applicant corrected one of the identified errors in the previous paper. However, with this amendment, FIG. 2B is amended as suggested by the Examiner. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

In item 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the specification. With this amendment the applicant has corrected the typographical error the Examiner noted. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

In item 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner requested the Applicant amend the independent claims to add the words respectively after the word levels for clarity. With this amendment the Applicant is amending claims 1, 15 and 19 to include the word requested by the Examiner. However, the Applicant asserts that these amendments are made for the purposes of clarity and are in no way meant to limit the claims.

In item 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-11 under 35 USC §112 second paragraph as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner indicated that in claim 1 the language "a second recessed level recessed below the first recessed level" leaves the claim incomplete, because there is no structural cooperation with any other element of the claim. While the Applicant respectfully disagrees, the claims are amended to clarify the difference between the levels so as to promote advancement. These amendments are made for purposed of clarity and in no way meant to limit the claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In item 8 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-8, 15, 16, 19 and 20 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Rao et al. US Patent Publication

2002/0075599. The Applicant has reviewed the Rao reference and must respectfully disagree.

Claim 1 requires “a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the bearing surface.” Claim 15 requires “a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider body”. Claim 19 requires “a center split feature disposed proximate a centroid of the slider”. The Examiner appears to interpret this to mean anywhere along the horizontal center line. This is not correct. The specification defines the centroid as the center of the slider surface, i.e. geometric center. In other embodiments, the centroid can be the center of mass or pressure (see the specification, page 8, lines 7-9). In the embodiment of FIG 2, the centroid is indicated by element 271. The centroid is not the horizontal center line of the slider surface, nor is it the vertical or lateral center line of the slider surface.

However, assuming arguendo, that the Examiner’s interpretation of the centroid is used, the Rao reference still does not disclose at least a three level center split feature located proximate this center. Rao discloses a furrow having a channel that is recessed below the level of the surface immediately behind the cavity dam. At best, the Rao reference teaches a feature that has two levels. The furrow of Rao forms from the trailing edge and wraps around the trailing center pod. However, this feature is not proximate the centroid of the bearing surface. The other levels of the Rao reference that the Examiner cited are located proximate the trailing edge of the slider. This feature is also not a center split feature as defined by the claims and specification. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-15 and 19 are not anticipated by the Rao reference. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In item 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 19 and 20 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Jang et al. US. Patent Publication 2002/0008940. With this amendment claim 19 has been amended to include the features of dependent claim 20. The Applicant has reviewed the Jang reference and must respectfully disagree.

Claim 19 requires a cavity dam disposed forward of the center split feature relative to the fluid flow. The Jang reference does not disclose a cavity dam disposed forward of the center split feature relative to the fluid flow. The Jang reference only discloses two front rails disposed at or near the leading edge. These front rails are not a cavity dam and no cavity is

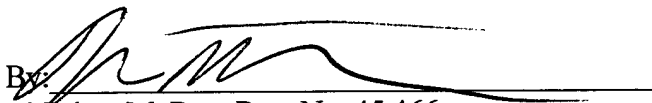
formed by them. Further as is commonly understood in the art a cavity dam forms the forward portion of a subambient pressurization cavity. This is not taught or suggested by the Jang reference. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the Jang reference does not teach or suggest the features of independent claim 19 as amended. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

In conclusion, it is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references teach or suggest the features of the present claims. Therefore, it is clear to see that claims 1-19 and 21 contain allowable subject matter. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTMAN, CHAMPLIN & KELLY, P.A.

By: 
Nathan M. Rau, Reg. No. 45,466
900 Second Avenue South, Suite 1400
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-3244
Phone: (612) 334-3222 Fax: (612) 334-3312

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